



Construction Services Division

1400 N. Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33607
Phone: (813) 274-3100
Fax: (813) 259-1712
www.tampagov.net/permits

Fences

Definition of a Fence:

For the purpose of the City of Tampa Code, a fence is defined as any barrier that is composed of:

1. Posts that are connected by intermediate material consisting of wood, wire, metal balustrades, or other similar materials.
2. Masonry/brick pilasters that are connected to metal balustrades, and may also have an associated masonry/brick knee wall between the pilasters.

Categories:

There are two categories of fences: those that require a permit, and those that do not require a permit.

When a Permit is Required:

A permit is required for a fence that meets the criteria of item 2 above. The reason is that the structural integrity of the pilasters and foundation system must be verified by plan review and permit inspection.

When a Permit is not Required:

A permit is not required for a fence that meets the criteria of item 1 above. The reason is that this type of fence is basically a structure that does not have the structural components of a pilaster-type fence, and can readily be disassembled.

Site Requirements:

Both of fences described above must meet the City of Tampa Zoning requirements as to heights, setbacks, and buffer requirements regardless of whether a permit is required or not. These requirements are listed below.

Sec. 27-133. Fence and Wall Regulations.

(a) *Visibility triangle.* All fences and walls shall conform to the requirements of section 27-240.

(b) *Conflict with buffer requirements.* Where a fence or wall is required to comply with section 27-130, and which fence may be in conflict with this section, the more restrictive regulation shall apply.

(c) *Materials.* Fences and walls shall be constructed of chain link, wood, masonry or decorative wrought iron, or a PVC (poly vinyl chloride) product manufactured and designed as a fence, except a varied below.

1. Security Fencing.

a. **Broken Glass.** The use of broken glass or other similar materials is prohibited in all districts..

b. **Electric Fences.** Electric fences or walls may be permitted as accessory to an agricultural use or may be used for security purposes in any industrial district, provided that the following standards are met:

- (1) Only low-voltage electrical fencing shall be used with a maximum of twelve (12) volts primary voltage;
- (2) The electrical fence shall be no higher than ten (10) feet tall;
- (3) The electrical fence shall be completely surrounded by a non-electrical fence or wall with a height not to exceed six (6) feet;
- (4) The surrounding non-electrical fence or wall shall be separated from the electrical fence by at least six (6) inches at the closest point between the electrical fence and the non-electrical surrounding fence or wall;
- (5) The electrical fence is identified as such with signage, no larger than 1 square foot in area, at least every sixty (60) feet;
- (6) Any property protected by an electrically charged fence shall provide, outside the perimeter of the fence, an emergency shut-off switch for fire and police department access. Fire Department access shall be of a type, location and marking specified and approved by the Fire Marshal. Police Department access shall be of a type, location, and marking specified and approved by the Police Chief; and
- (7) The zoning lot on which the electric fence is proposed for use shall not be adjacent to a residential use. If a residential use is adjacent to the site, the property owner or his agent may petition the Variance Review Board or the architectural review commission (in historic districts, generally, or landmark sites) or the Barrio Latino Commission (in the Ybor City Historic District) for consideration of the electric fence use as provided below.

c. **Barbed wire.** Barbed wire may be used for security purposes in any industrial district or if necessary to an agricultural use, provided that the barbed wire is limited to three (3) strands which are located a minimum elevation of six (6) feet above ground.

d. **Razor Wire.** The use of razor wire is prohibited unless approved through the variance process described below.

2. **Variations.** The variance review board or the architectural review commission (in historic districts, generally, or landmark sites) or the Barrio Latino Commission (in the Ybor City Historic District) may allow electric fencing, barbed wire or razor wire for commercial and industrial uses where a security need is demonstrated by the applicant. When approved, the barbed wire and/or razor wire shall be located at a minimum elevation of six (6) feet above the ground. Electric fencing shall be setback a minimum 6' from any property line adjacent to a residential use or residentially zoned property and must meet the first 6 criteria stated in (c) 1. b. above. When the subject parcel is adjacent to a residential use all barbed wire and razor wire shall be removed from the subject property prior to or in conjunction with the installation of an electrically charged fence, unless otherwise approved by the review board. The variance review board or the architectural review commission (in historic districts, generally, or landmark sites) or the Barrio Latino Commission (in the Ybor City Historic District) should consider the visual impact to surrounding residential uses. The variance review board or the architectural review commission (in historic districts, generally, or landmark sites) or the Barrio Latino Commission (in the Ybor City Historic District) may require the fence to be setback from property lines and screened. Buffering and screening requirements shall be consistent with Section 27-133. If screening is required, the property must be posted with warning signs (Danger--High Perimeter Security) every one hundred (100) lineal feet along the fence line.

3. **Exposed framing.** Walls or fences made from any permitted building material must be constructed so that the exposed framing of each section of fence faces the interior yard. However, prior to the installation of the fence, the zoning administrator may allow the exposed framing of the fence to face adjacent side and rear yards where the owner or contractor can clearly demonstrate one (1) of the following conditions:

(a) There is an existing fence and/or hedge located on the property adjacent to the parcel for which the new fence is required and the existing fence or hedge is of a construction and location such that it is physically impractical and feasible to install a wood fence with the exposed framing facing the interior yard.

(b) All adjacent affected property owners have declared in writing that they have no objection to the exposed framing.

(d) **Method of measurement.** Where a fence or wall is located at a common property line with varying elevation, including berms or permanent planters, the height shall be measured and averaged at regular intervals on both sides of the property line. The final height shall be determined by averaging the dimension obtained from the measure interval averages. The measured interval distances shall typically be eight (8) feet.

(e) **Front yards.** Within the single-family residential zoning districts, and YC-2 and YC-4 subdistricts, fences and walls may be located within required front yards provided that the height does not exceed three (3) feet for fences built of opaque materials, or four (4) feet for fences built of transparent materials which do not obstruct light, air and visibility.

(f) **Maximum height.** The maximum height for fences and walls are as follows:

District	Height
Single - and multiple-family district	6 feet
YC-2 and YC-4	6 feet
All other: office, commercial, industrial districts, M-AP 1-4, YC-1, YC-3, YC-5, YC-6, CD-1, and CD-2	8 feet
TQD, PD, PD-A and CD-3	As per zoning site plan
For CBD-1 and CBD-2 zoning districts refer to section 27-441 (h) Fence regulations.	

Decorative architectural features on fences/walls shall not be included in the height of a fence except that they shall not extend more than one (1) foot above the maximum height and shall have a minimum of eight-foot.

Sec. 27-240. Visibility at intersections.

All physical obstructions, landscaping, structures, vehicles, that stand between the heights of two and one-half (2.5) feet and eight (8) feet shall adhere to the Florida Department of Transportation, "Manual of Uniform Minimum Standards for Design, Construction and Maintenance, for Streets and Highways," 2004 edition, as amended. Furthermore, alternate designs may be considered by the transportation manager or designee, and are subject to the appeal method as set forth in this chapter.

(Ord. No. 8482-A, § 43A-49, 2-16-84; Ord. No. 9322-A, § 20(43A-155), 7-24-86; Ord. No. 9739-A, § 1(43A-175), 9-24-87; Ord. No. 2006-169, § 17, 7-13-06; Ord. No. 2006-209, § 2, 9-7-06

Cross references: Trees, shrubbery, etc., obstructing vision of drivers of motor vehicles, § 22-308; sight obstructions, § 22-310.

Sec. 27-130. Buffers and Screening

In order to reduce the impacts of a use of land on adjacent uses which are of a significantly different character, buffers and screening shall be required in accord with the following provisions of this section:

(1) *Buffers required.* A buffer consists of a horizontal distance from a property line which may only be occupied by screening, drainage areas, utilities and landscaping materials. The required buffering distance between land uses on adjoining zoning lots is set forth in buffer matrix below. Mechanical/air conditioning equipment, outdoor storage areas and parking areas shall not be located within the required buffers. Compliance with this section required in all cases of new construction, change of use or expansion of use or structure subject to the following exceptions:

a. Addition to an existing structure or increase in the intensity of capacity of existing (or change in) use which is less than or equal to five hundred (500) square feet or five (5) percent, whichever is less. This exemption may be exercised only once during the life of the building.

b. In cases where an addition or change in use exceeds five hundred (500) square feet or five (5) percent and where a fifteen-foot buffer would now be required, the buffer may include the loading area only when no alternative location exists, In such cases, the six-foot-high masonry wall is required.

BUFFER MATRIX

Proposed Use	Abutting Use					
	Another principal use in Use Group A	Dwelling, single-or two-family	Dwelling, multiple-family	Any use in Use Group B	Automotive repair, automotive maintenance or automotive storage facility or any combination thereof, light manufacturing, supply yard	Any use in Use Group C other than the above
Any other principal use in Use Group A	0	5	5	10	15	15
Dwelling, single-or two-family	5	0	0	0	0	N/A
Dwelling, multiple-family	5	5	0	10	15	15
Any principle use in Use Group B	10	10	10	0	15	10
Automotive repair, automotive maintenance, or automotive storage facility or any combination thereof, light manufacturing, open storage	15	15	15	15	0	0
Any principle use in Use Group C other than the above	15	15	15	10	0	0

NOTE: Numbers indicate width of buffer (in feet).

(2) Screening required.

a. Five- and ten-foot buffers shall consist of at least the following, together with any additional specifications of the city tree and landscaping ordinance:

1. A row of evergreen trees such as ligustrum, podocarpus, red cedar or holly which are planted twenty (20) feet on center. Trees shall be eight (8) to ten (10) feet in height with four- to six-foot spread and thirty (30) gallons at planting.
2. A row of evergreen shrubs between trees such as viburnum, ligustrum, holly or juniper planted five (5) feet on center. Shrubs shall be seven (7) gallons, thirty (30) to thirty-six (36) inches high and twenty-four- to thirty-six-inch spread (multi-stemmed) at planting.
3. Lawn, low-growing evergreen shrubs, evergreen ground cover or rock mulch covering the balance of the buffer.
4. Items (2)a. through (2)c. may be credited toward meeting the requirements of the tree and landscaping code, where applicable.

b. Fifteen-foot buffers shall consist of at least the following, together with any additional specifications of the city tree and landscaping ordinance:

1. Lawn, low-growing evergreen shrubs, evergreen ground cover, covering the balance of the buffer; and
2. A finished masonry wall located within the required buffer, such wall to be a minimum height of six (6) feet above finished grade. The wall may be placed at the property line. For purposes of this section, a finished masonry wall includes but is not limited to stucco, brick or any other decorative cover or finish;

3. For uses in Group B and C, property lines abutting right-of-way across from residentially zoned property shall be buffered as follows:

a. Property lines along the front/main entrance of the building shall be landscaped according to the requirements of the Tree and Landscape Code, Chapter 13.

b. Property lines along the side or rear walls of the building shall be buffered with a six-foot high finished masonry wall or a five-foot wide landscaping buffer as provided in section 27-130(2)a. above. This buffer does not apply to point of ingress and egress for driveways or pedestrian accessways.

(3) *Alternative buffers and screening.* In lieu of compliance with the above buffer and screening requirements, a developer may submit to the zoning administrator for his approval a detailed plan and specifications for buffering and screening equivalent to or exceeding that provided by the above requirements.

(4) *Existing vegetation.* The retention of existing vegetation shall be maximized to the extent practicable wherever such vegetation contributes to required buffering and screening or to the preservation of significant trees.

(5) *Maintenance of landscaping.* All landscaping and screening providing required buffering and screening shall be maintained so as to continue their effectiveness. All required landscaping and screening shall be equipped with an irrigation system, as applicable.

Overlay District Requirements

The purpose of an overlay district is to allow for the application of specific regulations to a distinct geographic area. The geographic area warrants special consideration due to a unique situation or practical difficulties resulting from the historic development pattern. Some of these districts either prohibit certain types of fences and walls, or regulate the type and location of them. Special fence requirements are indicated below for the following overlay districts.

Sec. 27-441 Central Business District:

(h) Fence regulations.

(1) *Applicability.* The requirements set forth herein shall apply to all fences built in Tampa's Central Business District. The requirements are based on the location of each fence installation in one of the following three (3) zones. These are minimum standards, and if the applicant desires the quality of the fencing material may be upgraded, subject to city planning division design approval.

The three (3) zones include the following character districts:

Zone 1: Cultural Arts District, Riverfront District, Franklin Street District, Retail District, and North Franklin Street Districts.

Zone 2: Gateway District, Government Center District, East Office District, and Garrison Channel District,

Zone 3: Development District North and Redevelopment District South.

(2) Requirements

	Maximum Height	Material
Zone 1		
Improved property	(Not allowed)	(Not allowed)
Unimproved property		
Screened	4 feet	Ornamental
Unscreened	(Not allowed)	(Not allowed)
Zone 2		
Improved property		
Screened fencing	4 feet	Black vinyl chain link
	6 feet	Ornamental fence*
Unscreened	4 feet	Black vinyl chain link

Unimproved property		
Screened fencing	4 feet	Black vinyl chain link
	6 feet	Ornamental fence*
Unscreened fencing	4 feet	(Black vinyl chain link)
	6 feet**	Ornamental fence*
Zone 3		
Improved property		
Screened	6 feet	Chain link
Unscreened	4 feet	Chain link
Unimproved property		
Screened	6 feet**	Chain link
Unscreened	6 feet	Chain link

Sec. 27-450 Channel District:

No specific fence or wall requirements were found.

Sec. 27-461 South Howard Commercial Overlay District:

8) Chain link fences may not front or be visible from South Howard Avenue.

Sec. 27-462 New Tampa Commercial Overlay District:

(3) The use of chain link fences, other than vinyl-clad, is prohibited. Vinyl-clad chain link may be used only when backed with a textile mesh screen.

(4) Unpainted or unfinished block fences or walls are prohibited. All sides and elevations of buildings, walls, or block fences visible at ground level from a public right of way or an adjacent parcel must be architecturally finished (i.e. brick, stucco, or textured concrete masonry units).

Sec. 27-463 Westshore Commercial Overlay District:

(4) Chain link and wooden fences are prohibited in the district, except during construction. Such construction fencing shall be removed prior to obtaining any certificate of occupancy. Decorative fencing for the purposes of implementing CPTED principles is encouraged.

(5) Unpainted or unfinished block fences or walls are prohibited. All sides and elevations of buildings, walls, or block fences visible from public right-of-way or an adjacent parcel must be architecturally finished (i.e. brick, stucco, or textured concrete masonry units) and maintained.

Sec. 27-464 Seminole Heights Residential Overlay District:

(5) *Fencing:* The erection of chain link fencing within the front yards of residentially zoned lots is prohibited.

Sec. 27-465 East Tampa Mixed Use Overlay District:

3) Unpainted or unfinished block fences or walls are prohibited. All sides and elevations of buildings, walls, or block fences visible from right of way or an adjacent parcel must be architecturally finished (i.e. brick, stucco, or textured concrete masonry units) and maintained.